

An Introduction to the USGS Florida Caribbean Science Center

Who We Are

The Florida Caribbean Science Center (FCSC) is a federal research facility of the Department of the Interior. Our people are federal, university and contract employees, graduate students and volunteers. FCSC personnel include biologists, ecologists, technicians and administrative staff.

What We Do

The science staff is dedicated to finding answers to regional environmental questions such as: how to maximize benefits of the Everglades ecosystem restoration; impacts of invasive aquatic species on native fishes and mussels; which contaminants are affecting the growth and reproduction of animals in Florida's waters; and the impact of African dust on reefs of Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Where We Are

Approximately 75 percent of the staff is located in Gainesville, with others stationed in Davie, Miami, St. Petersburg, Everglades National Park, and Big Cypress Preserve, Florida; and on St. John and St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Supporting Education

The Center supports the research efforts of graduate and undergraduate students at colleges and universities throughout Florida, including Florida A&M University, University of Florida and University of South Florida.



Sampling for Asian swamp eels in South Florida.

The FCSC also supports students who are working toward degrees at Duke University, University of Mississippi and University of Puerto Rico.

Most staff research scientists have adjunct faculty positions at Florida universities including Florida

A&M University, Florida International University, University of Florida, University of South Florida and University of Miami.



Above: Measuring freshwater mussels from the Suwannee River. Center: Graduate student examining fish tissue.



The Future of Science

To introduce potential future scientists and managers to federal research, each summer the Center supports the Department of Interior Diversity Intern Program. In 2002 the Center will host college interns who will work in the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, on the lakes of Central Florida and in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. The Center also hosts high school and college volunteers.

Part of the Community

We employ over 100 people throughout the state of Florida. Each summer that number expands considerably as interns arrive and temporary positions are filled to assist with the intense sampling season.



Injecting an alligator egg.

Primary summer assistance comes from graduate and undergraduate students. Interns and volunteers come from as far away as Long Island University in New York and Larenstein Agricultural University in the Netherlands. The Center also contracts with local organizations such as the Association of Retarded Citizens for needed services.



Left: Showing schoolchildren an American crocodile at a USGS open house. Right: teaching a group of Gainesville elementary students about SCUBA gear.

Local Community

Center staff across the state and in the U.S. Virgin Islands give presentations at elementary, middle and high schools. Every April the Center invites local schools and area residents to an open house where they can learn about research being conducted by USGS scientists. The Center participates in the Adopt-A-Highway program and staff lead field trips in Everglades National Park and Virgin Islands National Park.



Manatee mother and calf

Manatee researchers have contributed migration information to the educational website “Journey North” since 1997. This Web site allows students to learn about migration patterns and geography on a global scale, as well as the biology of the species being studied. “Journey North” has been used by over 4,500 schools in the U.S. and Canada.

For more information please contact:

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